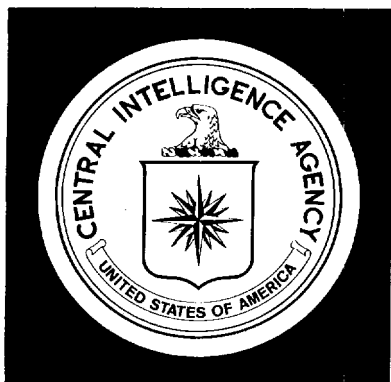


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January 7, 1974

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Next 1 Page(s) In Document Exempt

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January 7, 1974

25X1

# Central Intelligence Bulletin

## CONTENTS

25X1

OIL: Egyptian interior minister reportedly says oil  
boycott against the US will be lifted at the end of  
January.

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25X1

25X1

OIL: EGYPTIAN INTERIOR MINISTER SALIM REPORT-  
EDLY HAS TOLD MINISTRY OFFICIALS IN CAIRO THAT THE  
OIL BOYCOTT AGAINST THE US WILL BE LIFTED WHEN THE  
DISENGAGEMENT OF EGYPTIAN AND ISRAELI FORCES BEGINS;  
THIS WILL OCCUR, HE SAID, AT THE END OF JANUARY.  
SALIM PASSED ON THIS INFORMATION IN THE COURSE OF  
A BRIEFING FOR MINISTRY DEPARTMENT HEADS ON JANUARY  
4, FOLLOWING HIS RETURN FROM CONSULTATIONS WITH PRES-  
IDENT SADAT IN ASWAN

25X1

SALIM APPARENTLY DID NOT ELABORATE, AND THERE  
IS NO EVIDENCE TO CONFIRM THAT THE OIL-PRODUCING  
STATES HAVE DECIDED ON THIS RELAXATION. A FURTHER  
SOFTENING OF THE ARAB POSITION ON OIL WOULD, NEVER-  
THELESS, SEEM QUITE POSSIBLE. SAUDI ARABIA HAS AL-  
READY RELAXED ITS INITIAL POSITION THAT THE BOYCOTT  
COULD NOT BE LIFTED UNTIL THE CONCLUSION OF A FINAL  
PEACE SETTLEMENT, AND IT MAY HAVE BEEN PERSUADED,  
POSSIBLY WITH EGYPTIAN PRODDING, THAT PROGRESS ON  
DISENGAGEMENT WOULD BE SUFFICIENT CAUSE FOR LIFTING,  
OR AT LEAST EASING, THE BOYCOTT.

25X1

Jan 7, 1974

Central Intelligence Bulletin

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25X1

25X1

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